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United States Department of Agriculture
Agricultural Research Administration
Bureau of Animal Industry

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SUPPLEMENT NO. 6

to

SUMMARY OF DEVELOPMENTS

in the

MEXICAN OUTBREAK OF FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE

With Supplementary Information
on United States Cooperation
in Control Measures

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Note: This report has been prepared on the basis of the best information obtainable at the time of compilation but is subject to revision and amplification as new facts become available. Additional supplemental reports will be issued as significant developments in eradication work occur. The first report in this series was prepared January 28, 1947.

Highlights of New Developments in the Eradication Campaign

The following are highlights of progress made in the campaign to rid Mexico of foot-and-mouth disease, since July 3 when the last report in this series, Supplement No. 5, was issued:

Resumption of intensive slaughter and burial operations in the northern portion of the infected area following the receipt of necessary funds; beginning of the first eradication operation in the State of Veracruz.

Summary of slaughter operations and indemnity payments as of the most recent date.

U. S. Congressional delegation makes tour of northern operational areas.

Cattlemen of the northern, uninfected Mexican States organize to cooperate with campaign authorities in halting spread of the disease beyond present northern boundaries of infection.

Additional mules arrive to replace destroyed oxen and thus maintain the agricultural economy.

Arrival of additional veterinarians and other technicians from the United States to augment field forces.

Increased activity in disinfection of premises from which diseased animals have been removed.

Creation of self-sufficient field districts, and further development of more complete machine shop facilities.

Increased information activities in Mexico.

Progress of Slaughter Operations

After an enforced lull necessitated by a temporary lack of funds, the slaughter and burial of infected or exposed animals in the States of Guanajuato and Michoacan--two of the most northerly areas in which the foot-and-mouth disease has obtained a hold--were intensified during the week of July 5 following Congressional assurances that money will be regularly available for indemnity payments.

Large-scale slaughter operations have been resumed in both those States in line with the over-all strategy of the Mexican-United States Commission. This strategy calls for working from the extreme outposts of the malady toward the center of infection.

In the State of San Luis Potosi, near Tamazunchale--the northern-most advance of the virus--prompt and thorough-going slaughter and burial operations have virtually ended the known infection.

The first slaughter and burial operation in the South--the State of Veracruz--was begun July 9. This operation is designed to destroy about 6,000 head of cattle in an infected area in the southern part of Veracruz near the town of Coatzacoalcos. Objective of the operation, which concerns all the cattle between the Uzpana and Tonalia Rivers, is to prevent the spread of the disease to interior regions and to the Southern States of Chiapas and Tabasco and the Guatemalan border. Mexican Army troops have been detailed to maintain quarantine lines in connection with the operation.

Available figures on cattle-slaughter operations for the 4-week period ended July 26 show that a total of 58,888 head were killed and buried in 7 Mexican States. Most of this activity occurred in Guanajuato where the slaughter totaled 26,400 head. The next greatest volume of slaughter was in Michoacan, with 22,165 head. The States of Jalisco, San Luis Potosi, Queretaro, Guerrero, and Veracruz contributed the remainder.

To obtain a more precise determination of the extent of the infection in the State of Oaxaca, veterinarians of both sections of the joint commission are now working there. Reports already received indicate that the disease is active in one northern municipality adjacent to the State of Veracruz, and in part of another municipality next to Puebla.

Cattle Indemnities Average About $49

Indemnity payments for the cattle destroyed during the 4-week period ended July 26 averaged $49.18. This figure varies but slightly from $49.23 which was the average indemnity paid during the previous period of record covering nearly 3 months. Cattle appraisals are made jointly by United States and Mexican valuation experts in the presence of the owners or their representatives.

Under terms of the International agreement by which representatives of the United States are helping Mexico eradicate the disease, the United States has paid all indemnities for cattle since April 10, while the Mexican Government has assumed responsibility for indemnity payments to the owners of swine, sheep, and goats, slaughtered in the course of the campaign.

As the campaign progresses from the outlying areas of infection toward the main infected area, indemnity figures may fluctuate. This is largely because of varying numbers of registered and unimproved animals in different localities. During the 4-week period ended July 26, the average cattle indemnities in the various States ranged from $25.29 in Veracrua to $60.06 in Queretaro.

Congressional Delegation Observes Operations and Urges Speed

After conferring with United States and Mexican officials of the joint commission and making a three-day tour of infected northern areas in which operations were in progress, a seven-man delegation of the United States Congress expressed general approval of the plan of eradication and its execution although it urged greater speed and made other recommendations.

Making the tour of inspection were U. S. Senator Edward J. Thye of Minnesota, and Congressmen George W. Gillie of Indiana, Ernest K. Bramblett of California, A. L. Miller of Nebraska, Eugene Worley of Texas, H. Carl Anderson

of Minnesota, and A. M. Fernandez of New Mexico. They were accompanied by Dr. M. S. Shahan, co-director of the commission representing the United States, Lic. Oscar Flores, director of the commission and Mexican representative, and other commission staff members.

In the course of the tour, the visitors lived with field crews, traveled over almost impassable roads to observe the concentration of infected animals for slaughter, saw killing and indemnity-payment operations and the replacement of slaughtered oxen by mules, and talked to members of field crews and Mexican farmers. States visited were Queretaro, Guanajuato, Michoacan, and Mexico.

Northern Mexican Ranchers Pledge Aid

Cattlemen of the United States and technicians fighting against foot-and-mouth disease in Mexico acquired another group of allies early in July when the ranchers of the northern uninfected States of Mexico formed the Cattle-Raisers Congress for Defense Against Foot-and-Mouth Disease and pledged active support for eradication measures now being taken by authorities in central Mexico.

Meeting in the city of Torreon with a representative of the Mexican-United States commission combating the disease, the northern cattlemen gave evidence of an earnest desire to cooperate with joint commission authorities in every way possible to halt its spread and close in on it for eventual eradication.

In addition to pledging their support, members of the congress made a four-point suggestion that has been favorably received by both the commission and the Government of Mexico. The four points are:

1.--That the slaughter of infected or exposed animals be speeded up by every means at the disposal of the commission.

2.--That eradication authorities spare no efforts to make sure that persons, vehicles, and objects leaving the infected area for the clean Northern States are thoroughly disinfected at quarantine stations on the border of the infected area.

3.--That the Mexican Government give full support to efforts now being made by the Governors of Northern States to halt cattle stealing. Stolen cattle, usually transported from one place to another by stealth, might easily evade the boundary disinfection stations maintained by Mexican Army troops, and thus spread the infection if they came from central to northern areas .

4.--That the existing laws against violations of the quarantine regulations be enforced against violaters to the full extent of those decrees. This recommendation, of course, is directed specifically to the Mexican Government.

In conclusion, the cattle-raisers congress pledged itself to keep informed on the progress of the campaign so that it could be in a position to render maximum support to the work of eradication forces and to do educational work among the country people.

Welcoming the assistance of the northern Mexican ranchers, commission members observed that the activities of this influential group will, in effect, reinforce the barrier that has been thrown across central Mexico by sanitary

forces to prevent the spread of the disease to northern Mexico and the United States.

Cattlemen from the following States are represented in the membership of the organization: Sinaloa, Sonora, Chihuahua, Durango, Coahuila, Zacatecas, Nuevo Leon, San Luis Potosi.

Replacement of Slaughtered Oxen With Mules Spurs Rural Cooperation

In addition to men, money and materials--the three indispensable ingredients of success in the battle forces to rid Mexico of foot-and-mouth disease--there is one other necessary element: the cooperation of the rank and file of the Mexican people.

This cooperation is secured through understanding of their problems and concern for their welfare. In Mexico, the ox has long been the chief source of farm power. Most of the countrymen own small plots of land on which they raise the corn and beans on which they and their families exist. These plots are cultivated with oxen which, being cloven-footed animals, are susceptible to foot-and-mouth disease.

Of paramount importance is the prompt replacement of slaughtered oxen with mules, tractors, or other satisfactory source of farm power. Assurance of such replacement encourages the hard-put Mexican farmers to bring their oxen forth for sacrifice rather than to hide them in the hills where they might remain as potential sources of reinfection after the sanitary forces have completed slaughter operations and gone on to other areas.

By July 10, according to official figures of the Mexican Government, 14,516 mules, 7,164 sets of mule harness, and 5,409 modern steel plows had been delivered or were en route to States in the northern part of the infected area in which slaughter operations have been heaviest. Included in the mule total were over 1,000 animals brought from the United States.

The mules are purchased by farmers with indemnity money they have received for the sacrifice of their oxen. In the majority of instances, this money falls short of paying for the full cost of the mules, but a Mexican National Commission for the fight against the disease absorbs the difference through funds it has received from cattle salvage operations.

In addition to enabling eradication authorities to do a more thorough job through the cooperation of the Mexican small farmers, the mules-for-oxen program and the steel plows should help improve the productivity of Mexican farms.

More U.S. Personnel in Mexico

By July 11, the staff of the United States section of the Commission for the Eradication of Foot-and-Mouth Disease in Mexico totaled 170 persons, which was an increase of 26 employees over the number reported on June 27.

Of the total, 130 are in the field engaged in "front line" operations while the United States administrative and clerical staff in Mexico City headquarters is composed of 40 persons. Necessary additional employees are steadily arriving.

On July 11 the number of United States veterinarians in Mexico reached 65. Recruitment of qualified veterinarians for duty there continues to be an urgent task of the Bureau of Animal Industry's personnel officials. It is estimated that at least 85 more veterinarians will be needed.

Disinfection Operations Increased

Disinfection operations thus far have been concentrated largely in the States of Queretaro, Guanajuato, Michoacan, and Mexico. United States and Mexican sanitary technicians move into infected areas on the heels of slaughter crews, obtain necessary labor from local sources, and set about the disinfection of infected ranch premises, and also of animals, such as burros which though not susceptible to the disease, may act as carriers.

Equipment sent from the United States has been of great value to the disinfection crews. When a shortage of local water supplies is encountered, tank trucks are used to bring water from the nearest plentiful source which may be many miles distant. Pressure sprayers are used to apply the soda-ash or caustic-soda disinfecting solutions. Dozens of smaller items such as rubber equipment for the men, sponges, scrapers, brooms, and machetes are also utilized. Wherever possible, in accordance with approved practices, disinfection crews have spared farm property. Haystacks for example, instead of being destroyed, are carefully trimmed to remove parts on which the slaughtered animals have fed and are then sprayed with a suitable disinfecting solution.

Field Operations Decentralized

To make possible a rapid concentration of skilled technicians and necessary equipment in areas where the need is greatest, the commission has decentralized its field operations. Because success in eradicating foot-and-mouth disease depends on the ability of field workers to kill and bury animals with all possible speed, a decentralized system contributes to the progress of the work by eliminating the delay that would be incurred by sending men and materials long idstances from one central point.

Teams of men, equipment, and supplies are now functioning as practically complete separate units in 12 strategic districts. Each district is provided with the necessary personnel, machinery, disinfection chemicals, and other supplies needed to carry on all field operations without delay. Requisitions for additional supplies are made on the main warehouse of the commission in Mexico City. Plans provide that each large district will have facilities for the daily burial of from 2,000 to 3,000 animals and each small district between 200 and 500 animals.

In general, each district has a supervising veterinarian, with a staff, usually, of from two to seven veterinarians, two to seven appraisers, one to six paymasters, and one to three sanitary technicians. The States or parts of States served by the 12 district organizations are: 1, Guanajuato; 2,

In collaboration with commission technicians, the Ministry of Education has also produced and sent to all rural school teachers of the Republic a printed booklet on the disease and eradication methods and urges teachers to spread the information in their communities.

Supplementary Information

Since the issuance of Supplement No. 5 on July 3, the Department has issued, for public distribution, the following material relating to foot-and-mouth disease:

Northern Mexico Cattle Raisers Pledge Support of Disease Eradication Program. Press release, July 16, 1947

Mules from U. S. Replace Slaughtered Mexican Oxen. Press release, July 17, 1947

Mobile Machine Shops Aid Foot-and-Mouth Campaign in Mexico. Press release, July 21, 1947

Consultant Named for Foot-and-Mouth Disease Work in Mexico. Press release, July 22, 1947

Foot-and-Mouth Disease Officials Adhere to No-Vaccine Policy. Press release, July 24, 1947

More U.S. Veterinarians and Technicians to Aid Mexico in Disease Fight. Press release, July 29, 1947

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